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INFO RUHQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7380  
RUHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 7116  
RUHBAZ/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1376  
RUQNER/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY 4791

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 010P 02 STATE 256809/01

E.O. 12065: G D S-9/28/85 ( PECK, ROBERT)

TAGS: PEPR, SWAR, AF, UR, US, PK

SUBJECT: NEWSOM MEETING WITH AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. CONFIDENTIAL- ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: DURING LENGTHY, BUSINESSLIKE SESSION IN NEW YORK, UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM AND AFGHAN FOMMIN SHAH WALI TRADED MUTUAL EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS, BUT AGREED ON LITTLE ELSE. DISCUSSION TOUCHED ON THE DUBS ASSASSINATION AND THE DRA APPROACH TO ACCEPTANCE OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. SHAH WALI AFGHAN "FUGITIVES" WERE BEING TRAINED THERE. HE MINIMIZED THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN AND DEFENDED HIS GOVERNMENT'S INDEPENDENCE AND NON-ALIGNMENT. WE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE DRA'S INTEREST IN CONTROLLING NARCOTICS. END SUMMARY.

3. AT US INITIATIVE, UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM CALLED ON AFGHAN FOMMIN SHAH WALI FOR A GENERAL HOUR-LONG EXCHANGE OF VIEWS SEPT 27 IN NEW YORK. ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS AND NEA/PAB DIRECTOR PECK SAT IN. SHAH WALI HAD ONLY A NOTETAKER WITH HIM.

4. NEWSOM OPENED BY NOTING THAT WHEN HE WAS LAST IN AFGHANISTAN HE MET WITH THEN-PRESIDENT TARAKI AND FOM. MINISTER AMIN. HE WANTED TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE FOMMIN'S VISIT TO EXTEND HIS BEST WISHES TO AMIN AND TO SHAH WALI AS THEY ASSUMED THEIR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. NEWSOM SAID CHARGE AMSTUTE HAD REPORTED THAT HE HAD A CORDIAL CONVERSATION EARLIER THE SAME DAY WITH PRESIDENT AMIN.

5. IN RESPONSE SHAH WALI SAID THE DRA HAD FROM THE BEGINNING WANTED TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES WITHOUT EXCEPTION. AFGHANISTAN HAD TRADITIONALLY FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE US AND THE DRA HAD BEEN DESIROUS OF MAINTAINING THESE TIES. REFERRING TO THE DUBS ASSASSINATION, SHAH WALI SAID "CERTAIN EVENTS" HAD ACCURRED WHICH THE DRA DID NOT WANT. THE DRA HAD DONE ITS BEST TO PROVE THAT THESE EVENTS HAD BEEN OUTSIDE ITS CONTROL.

6. NEWSOM NOTED THAT THE REACTION IN THE US TO THE DUBS ASSASSINATION HAD BEEN VERY STRONG AND LED TO THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WHICH REDUCED SOMEWHAT OUR COOPERATION. WE HAVE TRIED TO EXTEND OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AS LONG AS WE COULD UNDER THE LAW, AND ARE PHASING OUT OUR PROGRAMS IN AN ORDERLY FASHION. THE US WAS ALWAYS READY TO DISCUSS STEPS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN TO PUT OUR RELATIONS BACK ON A MORE NORMAL BASIS. WE WELCOMED WORD THAT PRESIDENT AMIN WANTED BETTER RELATIONS. WHEN THE TIME CAME WHEN BETTER RELATIONS COULD BE DISCUSSED, WE WERE WILLING TO EXPLORE HOW THE CONDITIONS LAID DOWN BY CONGRESS MIGHT BE MET.

7. IN REPLY TO SHAH WALI'S SUGGESTION THAT "FALSE PROPAGANDA" ON THIS ISSUE HAD UNDULY INFLUENCED US POLITICAL LEADERS, NEWSOM SAID IT WAS THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE ASSASSINATION THAT WERE RESPONSIBLE, NOT NEWSPAPER REPORTS. WE ALSO FELT THAT WE HAD NOT GOTTEN AS MUCH COOPERATION IN THE INVESTIGATION AS WE COULD HAVE EXPECTED. IN DEFENSE, SHAH WALI POINTED TO THE SERIOUS DOUBTS STILL REMAINING ABOUT THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION AND REITERATED THAT THE DRA BELIEVED IT HAD DONE ITS BEST.

8. REMINDED OF PREVIOUS USG ASSISTANCE TO AFGHAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SUCH AS THE HELMAND VALLEY, SHAH WALI SAID THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE PREVIOUS "FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES THAT THE DRA CONSIDERED THE PRESENT SITUATION TO BE "ABNORMAL." HE SAW NO HINDRANCE OF PROBLEM WHICH COULD NOT BE SOLVED. HE DENIED THAT THE DRA WAS TURNING AWAY FROM THE PRIOR AFGHAN PRACTICE OF DRAWING ON MULTIPLE AID SOURCES AND ADVISERS IN PUTTING TOGETHER COOPERATIVE PROJECTS. SHAH WALI POINTED TO THE CONTINUATION OF WORLD BANK, GERMAN AND OTHER PROJECTS, AND ARGUED THAT AFGHANISTAN'S ACTIONS IN SOME "SPECIFIC CASES"

( READ U.S. ) HAD ARISEN FROM A FEELING THAT INDIVIDUALS DID NOT HAVE PROPER QUALIFICATIONS. HE ADDED THAT AFGHANISTAN HAD ASKED FOR MORE PERSONNEL IN CERTAIN CASES, CITING THEIR REQUEST TO CARE-MEDICO ( WHICH HAD A LARGE US PERSONNEL COMPONENT ) FOR MORE MEDICAL SPECIALISTS. HE ADDED WITH APPARENT REGRET THAT CARE-MEDICO HAD BEEN UNABLE TO COMPLY, AND THAT HE HAD LEARNED SHORTLY BEFORE DEPARTING KABUL OF CARE-MEDICO'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW ALL OF ITS PERSONNEL FROM THE COUNTRY.

9. SHAH WALI REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE WHEN ASKED IF HE EXPECTED CHANGES IN BASIC DRA POLICIES FOLLOWING RECENT LEADERSHIP CHANGES. HE EXPECTED CONTINUITY SINCE THE POLICIES WERE LAID DOWN BY THE PARTY, AND THE PARTY STILL EXISTED. NEWSOM SAID WE HAD NOTICED PRESIDENT AMIN'S

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STATED DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS PAKISTAN AND IRAN. SHAH WALI SAID THIS REFLECTED THE SINCERE DESIRES OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE AND THE PARTY. HE SAID DEPUTY FORMER DOST'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN HAD RESULTED IN HAVANA AND FORMER PRESIDENT TARAKI HAD ALSO TALKED WITH PAKISTANI PRESIDENT ZIA THERE. HE WAS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT THE LATTER MEETING "REFLECTED THE DESIRE OF OUR GOVERNMENT". HE INDICATED THAT BOTH AGHA SHAHI AND ZIA HAD BEEN INVITED TO KABUL, BUT THAT IT WAS UNDERSTOOD ZIA WOULD COME ONLY AFTER AN AGHA SHAHI VISIT HAD TAKEN PLACE.

10. AT ANOTHER POINT IN THE CONVERSATION, SHAH TOOK A MILD SWIPE AT PAKISTAN WHEN DISCUSSING THE UNDERLAYING CAUSES OF THE INSURGENCY. HE SAID THE REZLES WERE MOSTLY THOSE WHO HAD LOST THEIR FORMER FEUDAL PRIVILEGES, BUT ADDED THAT PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS CREATED BY AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS. HE POINTED TO THE CAMPS IN PAKISTAN WHERE AFGHAN "FUGITIVES" WERE KEPT.

HE ADDED THAT PAKISTAN ALSO SENT SOME "MILITIA" INTO AFGHANISTAN. ASKED ABOUT THE REFUGEE SITUATION, SHAH WALI ARGUED THAT AFGHANISTAN'S BORDERS WERE VERY POROUS AND THAT 2.5 MILLION NOMADS CROSSED THE FRONTIERS EVERY YEAR. THE EXPLANATION, HE CONCLUDED, WAS THAT "THEY HAVE DETAINED OUR NOMADS."

11. ON THE SUBJECT OF RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION SHAH WALI SAID AFGHANISTAN'S TRADITIONAL GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBOR HAD CHANGED LITTLE WITH THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENTS OVER THE YEARS. ASKED IF HE SAW ANY CONTRADICTION BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN'S PROFESSIONS OF NON-ALIGNMENT AND THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET TROOPS IN THE COUNTRY, SHAH WALI SAID THE NUMBERS OF SOVIET ADVISORS HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED. A MOUNTAIN HAD BEEN MADE OUT OF MOLEHILL. HE POINTED OUT THAT AFGHANISTAN HAD HAD SOVIET ADVISERS BEFORE THE REVOLUTION, AND SAID THE NUMBER HAD NOT CHANGED MUCH. HE DECLINED TO BE FINNED DOWN AS TO EXACT NUMBER THERE NOW, AND SAID THERE WERE ADVISORS FROM OTHER NATIONS SUCH AS INDIA. IN APPARENT CONTRADICTION OF HIS EARLIER STATEMENT, HE CONCLUDED THERE HAD BEEN NO QUALITATIVE CHANGE IN THE SITUATION, JUST A QUANTITATIVE ONE.

12. SHAH WALI ALSO DECLINED TO BE PINNED DOWN AS TO WHETHER THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA) WAS A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY. HE SAID WE COULD JUDGE OURSELVES FROM THE PROGRAM OF THE PARTY. THE PDPA, HE ADDED, REFLECTED THE SOCIALIST STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY. NEWSOM RECALLED HIS EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH THEN FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN ON THE NATURE OF THE PDPA IN LIGHT OF US LEGISLATION BEARING ON RELATIONS WITH NATIONS DOMINATED OR CONTROLLED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. DID SHAH WALI CONSIDER THE PDPA A PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST MOVEMENT OR AS A PURELY AFGHAN ENTITY? SHAH WALI SAID THE PDPA WANTED RELATIONS WITH ALL PARTIES, NOT JUST THOSE IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. HE ASSURED NEWSOM THAT HIS WAS A SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT NOT UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ANOTHER GOVERNMENT OR PARTY. AFGHANISTAN WAS FAITHFUL TO THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND WANTED TO HAVE A POLICY OF ITS OWN. NEWSOM COMMENTED THAT THE US RESPECTED "TRUE NON-ALIGNMENT", BUT THAT WE HAD PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES WITH SOME COUNTRIES' DEFINITION OF NON-ALIGNMENT--SPECIFICALLY THAT OF CUBA.

13. SAUNDERS SAID WE APPRECIATED THE DRA'S INTEREST IN CONTROLLING THE FLOW OF NARCOTICS. DESCRIBING NARCOTICS AS A MAJOR NATIONAL PROBLEM IN THE US, SAUNDERS SAID WE WERE PREPARED TO WORK WITH AFGHAN AUTHORITIES AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COOPERATION THE DRA MIGHT GIVE. SHAH WALI BRIGHTENED VISIBLY IN THANKING US FOR MENTIONING THIS MATTER. HE SAID THE DRA HAD BURNED A CACHE OF HASHISH LAST YEAR WORTH DOLS 25 MILLION, BUT THE WESTERN PRESS HAD PAID THIS NO HEED. NEWSOM REGRETTED THE LACK OF PUBLICITY BUT SAID WE IN THE USG HAD NOTICED. WE RECOGNIZED THE DIFFICULTIES COUNTRIES FACED IN INTERFERING WITH TRADITIONAL NARCOTICS CULTURE AND TRAFFICKING, PARTICULARLY SINCE NARCOTICS COULD BE AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INCOME FOR POOR FARMERS. IT WAS AN ACT OF COURAGE FOR A GOVERNMENT IN A COUNTRY SUCH AS AFGHANISTAN TO TAKE A STRONG STAND, AND WE APPRECIATED THIS. HE ADDED THIS WAS A POSITIVE ELEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS.

14. IN CLOSING, NEWSOM SAID HE WANTED TO KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES OPEN. HE HAD ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS, BUT THIS HAD BEEN IN THE INTEREST OF FINDING A BASIS ON WHICH WE WOULD IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS. HE HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE RECEPTION PRESIDENT AMIN HAD GIVEN TO OUR MESSAGE EARLIER IN THE DAY AND HOPED THIS WOULD SIGNAL CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS. VANCE

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